

RE: House Bill 6861

Dear Senator Geratanna, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee:

My name is Jessica Leopizzo and I am a Marriage and Family Therapist intern, graduate student at Central Connecticut State University and student consultant for Connecticut Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. I live in Bristol, Connecticut and I intern in Newington.

I am writing/speaking to you today to bring your attention to an important issue for MFTs in Connecticut. I am asking for your support of legislation that would create an "Associate," or LMFTA for Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs) in our State.

- After I graduate to become licensed, in the State of Connecticut I must graduate from an accredited program, pass the National Licensure exam and accrue 1000 direct client contact hours with 100 hours of supervision. Typically, this takes 2 years of full time employment to accomplish.
- Being the graduate assistant for the Marriage and Family Therapy program at Central Connecticut State University I keep contact with the program's alumni. I hear over and over from recent graduates that getting a job unlicensed is seems impossible due to the fact that the majority of jobs for licensed Marriage and Family Therapists. This leads to many dropping out of the field or working unpaid.
- The state of Connecticut is an outstanding state because it has the most accredited Marriage and Family Therapy programs in New England. There are not enough jobs being offered for the amount of graduates. The LMFTA would support our field and make more job opportunities.
- In 2010 Social Work graduates in Connecticut obtained an interim license, which when implemented, will create an uneven process for post grads in equivalent mental health disciplines.
- I have been interning at Ruth L. Chaffee School in Newington for two years. My role includes providing family therapy for students and staff as well being part of the schools PBIS team and school culture and climate team. Without being licensed and school certificated I cannot legally work in a school. Students like myself who focus on schools have to take a 2 year break away from schools to get licensed before being placed back in a school. Now that I am leaving I have heard from the principal and staff that they want me to stay on and we have tried to find ways for employment, but because I am not licensed I can't be employed by the school that is in need of mental health services that I can provide.

I urge that your support of HB 6861 to create an associate license for MFTs. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jessica R. Leopizzo
Student Consultant
Connecticut Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
264 Terryville Ave.
Bristol, CT, 06010

